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You are here: [Home](#) / [Podcast](#) / Copyright Trolls: Jason Tucker's inside look at Prenda Law, the most accomplished trolls to go to jail.

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Copyright Trolls

Jason Tucker's inside look at Prenda Law, the most accomplished trolls to go to jail

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In episode #5 of The Copyright & Intellectual Property Podcast, we're talking all things copyright trolls!

The Copyright & Intellectual Property Podcast – Episode #5

In episode #5 of The Copyright & Intellectual Property Podcast Jason is talking about copyright trolls! Including how copyright trolls work. His inside look at Prenda Law, the most accomplished trolls to ever get convicted and go to jail. What happened when Malibu Media tried to shake down an acquaintance's kid. A look inside of Strike 3 Holdings. And most importantly, what you can do if targeted by a troll. Including what you can do to avoid them and beat them if they come after you.

Make sure you listen to this episode to get a real behind the scenes view of a troll farm and how porn, drugs, money, and fraud drove the lawyers of Prenda Law to jail.



COPYRIGHT & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PODCAST
Hosted by JASON TUCKER
30 00:00:00 / 00:33:36 Copyright trolls. How they work. My inside look at Prenda Law, the most accomplis...

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*Note: Some of the names have been changed.

Copyright Trolls:

A **copyright troll** is officially defined as a person or company that enforces **copyrights** it owns specifically for purposes of making money through litigation, in a manner considered unduly aggressive or opportunistic, generally without producing or licensing the works it owns for paid distribution.

My definition of a copyright troll is a bit different...to me, a copyright troll is a person or company that looks to sue anyone and everyone they can for profit. Trolls don't take the time to gather or put together evidence. They don't look for a solution to piracy. The parties do all this only to collect money. The main source of income for any troll is money through the threat of litigation.

Want more information on online piracy? Check out this post titled [What is digital piracy and how does it affect you?](#)

Prenda Law: John Steele, Paul Hansmeier, & Paul Duffy

I've been seeing write-ups and hearing stories from talking heads who have bullshit opinions.

I was there and know what was actually going on.

I've had multiple invitations to join the party, the curtain was pulled back for me. In this post & podcast, I share, from my point of view, what I believe is the real story of Prenda Law.

Here are the stories and more importantly the lessons others can learn from me having at a front-row seat to Prenda's beginning and VIP tickets to one of the dirtiest copyright troll forms dressed up as a law office we've ever seen.

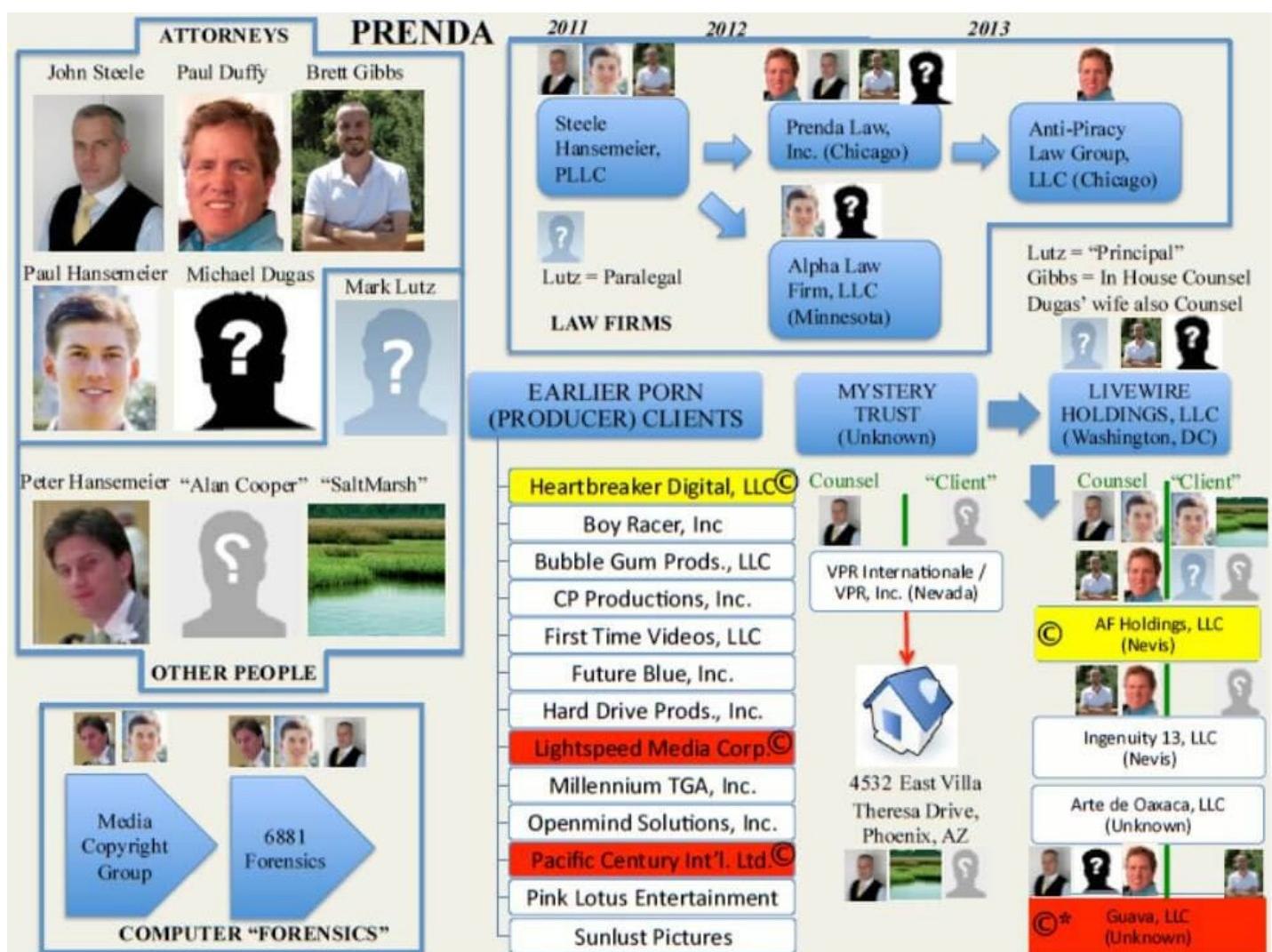


Image used by Morgan Pietz in his lawsuit against Prenda

Prenda Law Backstory:

Like many others...it all began with porn.

The guys running Prenda should have known that the way they were trolling was illegal. They also knew that if they used the threat of people being publicly humiliated with the threat of porn, that people would just pay to make them go away.

They were the perfect blend of troll and greed. So finally, here we go.

Prenda Law

John Steel – 1st Introduction to the Adult Industry

John Steele first came on the scene in October 2010 at a private invitation-only content protection gathering in Tucson, Arizona. This small group of hand-picked invite-only studio owners and a few choice and trusted attorneys.

John Steele was wearing... I'll never forget it; skull and crossbones cuff links as he shared his idea for a moneymaking utopia. Skull and crossbones are the symbol of pirates, not antipiracy! Yeah! He wore the symbol of pirates to talk anti-piracy at that moment in time.

Steele didn't look like a drunk cokehead who just wanted to fuck porn stars and strippers, although that is who he ended up becoming...or maybe that's who he always was. It's really hard to know when it comes to the adult industry.

“ Steele didn't look like a drunk cokehead who just wanted to fuck porn stars and strippers...

Jason Tucker

Paul Hansmeier, Prenda's Mastermind & Ringleader

Hansmeier, in comparison, is the reserved one who would rather sit at a desk and come up with more ways to get money from marks than be with people. He just looks uncomfortable in a crowd.

Paul Duffy, Prenda Ringleader

I didn't have much experience of Duffy, but when it got too hot (meaning it looked like they were going to do jail time) he took the Nick Cage 'Leaving Las Vegas' route to get out of all of this trouble. I'm not one to speculate on someone who has passed away.

The Prenda Mouthpiece & Willing Participant

John Steele was the Prenda Law mouthpiece. His sales pitch was something to the effect of, "We're going to get contact information about people who touch adult content on torrents."

"We're gonna send them demanding letters that basically say we caught you watching Gay Black Dick Fat Booty Sex Part 27 and if you don't pay us we're going to sue you and your neighbors family ."

He actually said, [their] "church will find out".

I'll stop right here. If you thought *extortion*, you'd be pretty fucking close.

" If you thought *extortion*, you'd be pretty fucking close.

Jason Tucker

Prenda Laws model itself – is not illegal.

If the receiving party did in fact download or view or sell or redistribute Gay Black Dick Fat Booty Sex Part 27 then there's potentially a legitimate claim.

The problem is, from my point of view on torrents, the evidence isn't as clear as I would like it to be because the way torrents work it's easier to land on something really vague.

For example, it's possible they did. We don't know for sure in fact that they did this with the whole movie.

So Prenda's approach is morally suspect, but it's not illegal.

It's what John Steele and Paul Hansmeier did later that repeatedly crossed the legal lines.

The adult industry has worked hard and spent tens of millions of dollars to be able to operate legally with defined guidelines. In that space, the gay adult industry has worked harder because most have had to overcome their own personal struggles and more prejudice.

So here comes an attorney who wants to use the "maybe viewing habits" of a person at the most private times, and use personal adult-themed search terms, to basically extort money.

They added that they were going to automate this extortion letter process and thought everyone should rejoice in their genius.

It was like a shockwave hit the fucking room.

I was pissed and I wasn't alone in that instance, I locked eyes with Marc Randazza, another attorney who was there. Without speaking we both had this "Are you fucking kidding me did I hear that right?!?" look. That look was shared with others in the room.

Steele was at the front continuing to pitch.

I was the first on my feet but I was the second to ask a question.

I would have been the first but one of the attorneys, who I'll call **Bill*, was so quick to get on his feet and explode with rage that I thought he was going to launch Steele through the fucking ceiling.

**Bill* represented (and still does) a good chunk of the gay studio market. He rightfully saw how dangerous these fuckers were.

From that first day on, I told every content producer that I knew to steer clear these guys.

On a lunch break that day, Steele came over introduced himself. I'm sitting down, he's standing up, and as he's reaching down to shake my hand. All I can do is stare at these frickin skull and crossbones cufflinks. He arrogantly came over, introduced himself, and immediately jumped into his sales pitch.

I was there as a studio owner, who had already successfully won multiple copyright infringement cases. I listened and I told them we could stay in touch but I had no interest in going after users for pure profit and no strategic purpose.

He said he wanted to talk more and maybe find a way for us to work together. I said, "Sure why not."

And if you're wondering why would I want to even stay in touch with this guy. It's easy. Friends close enemies closer is a bit of a mission statement in most of the areas I work in.

“ ‘Friends Close & Enemies Closer’ is a bit of a mission statement of mine.

Jason Tucker

Flash forward. Steele had successfully got some studios on board. He was filing John Doe lawsuits and mass sending letters collecting and sending nice checks to his clients.

On its face none of that was illegal. It was opportunistic, yes and some would say morally corrupt...but not illegal.

What always kind of had me cocking my head was, they were pulling in too much money for what they were doing. Something was amiss.

The purpose of discovery is to gain information to help further a case, not to get the contact information for a shakedown.

As time went on, Judges, service providers, attorneys, and people who saw this for what it was started asking questions or they stood up to Prenda. That made the model harder and the margins a bit thinner. So they came up with a scheme to cut out the middleman and be the studio the honeypot trapping people and the enforcers.

This is where the wheels came off the bus and the lines got crossed.

They created an adult studio on paper using Hansmeier's gardener as the named studio owner on the shell companies. They set up foreign entities and accounts. They bought all rights to some content and made it available for the world to steal. They use the same model as before but when Judges didn't give them early discovery it appears they may have forged subpoenas to get some of the information anyway.

Like the [Billionaire Boys Club](#) and Bernie Madoff and others, the scheme looked great from the outside until it didn't...

The Prenda boys were making big money and spending it just the same.

It was at this point John Steele had fully morphed into who he thought he should be in the adult industry. And that was sloppy.

Prenda started sponsoring adult industry events and having a larger presence at trade shows. So with what looked like illicit fuel in his system, he was crossing lines that are frowned upon the adult industry.

It's not professional to sample all of the product. As a studio, you don't want your attorney being the sloppy guy at a party.

I've seen a ton of outsiders who are invited in for a short period of time. They miss this point completely and they end up getting ostracized. They end up losing clients. Some have even ended up losing their entire business as a result of it.

So time goes on and here I am standing with Steele and Hansmeier at a trade show in the middle of a naked model dodgeball event. Steele asked me again to join his business. He shared how much money I was leaving on the table by not doing this with him.

Steele had traded his wife for a stripper girlfriend and she was standing topless about six feet away. He said something to the effect of him offering his girlfriend up to me like a library card I could check out.

I politely declined both offers.

Since he didn't seem sober and he was chatty, I used it as an opportunity to ask questions. Steele enthusiastically went on to explain how the operation was set up. Overseas businesses and bank accounts. The money. The honey pots...the full racket.

“ Steele explained the overseas businesses and bank accounts. The money. The honey pots...the full racket.

John Steele

He didn't tell me about the gardener frontman or the details on the fake studio though, that all came out later.

The fake studio was pretty obvious since no one had ever heard of the studio name that they were using to send demands letters to people in order to harass them.

I also knew at that point the legal heat was turning up for them.

Their model was starting to show holes just based on what was going on in the industry, and I knew these guys were already in real trouble and their game was about to end.

Prenda Law Started To Impact Legit Lawsuits

I knew Prenda was starting to have issues because not three months earlier I was asked about them by a Federal Judge.

Our Chief Litigator, Attorney Spencer Freeman, and I were in a court-ordered mediation that we had before trial in a case where our clients were suing a video-on-demand provider for selling our client's content without a license. Side note -we won that case.

Spencer and I are in this judge's chambers and the Judge asked me if this case was “like those guys he was reading about in Chicago, that were suing end users?”

We were in Los Angeles, California.

So I asked, "Prenda and John Steele?"

He said, "Yes. How is this case not like theirs?"

Let's pause and take a moment. There had been no major or minor news story on Prenda. However, his Honor just told me that he had read about them.

Judges don't typically just ask random nonspecific questions.

Now a Federal Judge on the other side of the United States was asking me about these guys. The robes were talking and that in itself was kind of telling. The judge was not accusing us of being like Prenda, but he knew from my resumé and through my declarations, he made the connection with the adult industry.

I explained how and what they were doing to the best of my ability.

The judge then asked a few detailed questions about torrents, peer to peer technology, and how that relates to what Prenda was doing.

I honestly told them without any colorful language what was going on and he ended up saying this doesn't sound like this at all. He was using it as a fact-finding mission.

This was telling. The judges were getting smart to the scheme.

This also telegraphed that the complaints I was involved with needed to really spell out what we found and how the sites we were targeting worked so that we could make sure there was no doubt that our clients weren't being seen as

anything that was related to Prenda and their end-user scheme.

So the difference in the Prenda model, at that point, is when the checks came in they kept them and continue their extortion scheme because now they were the studio. I also believe that they stopped accurately reporting how much money they were taking in for their actual studio clients and they kept more of that money.

Judges stopped granting the easy path they wanted. So, Prenda created a workaround and it looks like it was through forgery, perjury, and fraud.

And that worked, to some degree, until a judge called them out and ordered the opening an investigation. That's when the house of cards really started to fall.

You would think somebody would just kind of say game over. But no. To make it worse for themselves when asked questions about the scheme they lied to the judge. They lied to investigators. They just lied. Not once, but repeatedly for over a year. They lied while acting as Officers of the Court because that's what attorneys are.

My wife Melissa recently shared with me, after I talked about Hansmeier looking at over 20 years and getting 14 years in jail, that a 14-year sentence seemed excessive because murderers can get less time. And yes that's true.

“ The entire legal system fails if people lie under oath.

Jason Tucker

Now keep in mind, the entire legal system fails if people lie under oath.

These guys lied and then they lied to cover up the previous lies. Hansmeier didn't make any admission of guilt and dishonestly until he was staring down the

barrel of the rest of his life in jail. You can fact check me on this one. I'm pretty sure Hansmeier is pissed, thinks what they did was right, and thinks his sentence is bullshit. I will be shocked if he doesn't file an appeal on his sentencing from jail.

“ I will be shocked if Paul Hansmeier doesn't file an appeal on his sentencing from jail.

Jason Tucker

It's not uncommon for attorneys who stand in courtrooms to bend a truth so that they can ethically provide the best offense or defense for their clients. But when that truth is just a bold lie and they know it's a lie and they tell that lie – the system has to take you out of the game.

The Prenda Law Scam

I was asked throughout the years to join them and at all times they said the same thing, “No fucking way.” These guys were just wrong and now these former attorneys got caught committing fraud, identity theft, perjury at all levels...they lied to Federal Judges...they lied to their clients and they hurt legitimate copyright claimants. That bothers me.

But what really gets me is that these people caused harm and stress and real embarrassment not just to the studios but to what we in the adult industry called civilians, not industry people who got swept up in their game. When their models stopped being a cash cow they switched it up to go after suspected password traders. Now, the password trader model had teeth and still does. But they were so dirty at that point judges were doubting them and service providers just didn't believe them.

Prenda Law & Their Torrent End-User Litigation Scam

Here's a non-technical summary of how trolls deploy what I call the torrent user lawsuit model.

As a troll, you put content on a computer and connect the computer to a torrent site. Then you wait.

When people start pulling the file, you're going to gather all those IP addresses. Those IP addresses are like computers' phone numbers on the Internet.

When you have a lot of IP addresses you need to now figure out who they belong to and kind of put a name to a number. So, you take that list you map out the IP is to find out the geographic location copy all the U.S. addresses.

If you wanted to in the US into a list and that becomes exhibit A for which you should now file a John Doe lawsuit against all of these numbers representing that you're suing a number of people at once and now you need to find out who they are.

Then you file a motion with a court asking them to grant what's called early discovery because in most instances that's the only way you're getting information on who these numbers belong to.

Now the court grants the motion for early discovery. The attorney with subpoena power now sends the list to the respective Internet Service Providers. They, in turn, more often than not send information back. And because most people don't use VPN, the IP belonging to your Internet Service Provider will result in them identifying who it is. This is their billing information.

Now the next proper move would be to send a letter saying we're suing you if you wish to discuss, settle, we'll accept X by Y. In early discovery, it was

designed to help a plaintiff move the early stages of litigation along not be abused.

Most people who get a letter will try to negotiate. they'll pay but if it's from a troll the smartest is a copy s and wait and see if there's evidence before paying. If a person doesn't agree to settle, you're supposed to or you should.

The proper thing to do would be to amend the complaint name that person serve the lawsuit and continue to push it through the court system until the parties reach an agreement or it's tried or not appealed printout abused the shit out of that.

Litigation is expensive. Even if you got a great deal, it would still cost you at least \$5,000 just to start the process.

So understanding that, in order for a troll model to work, you need a couple of things. You need more people to be settling with you than paying to mount a defense. You also need to be able to get information on those on those users as cheap as possible.

In order for Prenda to make the John Doe suits cost-effective, they lump thousands of IP addresses into a single filing and then ask the court to grant early discovery. They then sent the subpoenas to AT&T, Charter, and Comcast who gave them the information, under that court order, of who was using an IP address on a particular date and time once they got that information. (Or a troll uses gets that information same thing) they stop movement on the case. All they do is start sending letters, making calls and threats.

They need you to pay them not fight them. It was a numbers game for them. Like most trolls, they don't intend on pushing an actual lawsuit forward.

Judges have gotten smart to this scheme and are not liberally granting motions

for early discovering cases that look like they're trolling. As I've shared the purpose of John Doe suits to gain information to streamline the litigation of copyright claims it's not for leveraging settlement payments. So the purpose of a judge is to judge. That's why they went these cases to move forward without a judge. There's no one to say, "Hey this person's innocent this person's guilty."

So for Prenda, when the torrent model basically came to a halt because it would have been too hard to fight it on the merits and they were told that they would have to go to these single-file settings where they couldn't go after thousands of people at a time like they had been doing.

They needed a new model because the one that they used, that I explained, it wasn't gonna work anymore.

End-user litigation on a one to one basis is not sustainable because you're never going to be able to collect the amounts of money it would require for the cost of entry of each one on a regular basis.

Courts have also gotten smarter. Recently the Supreme Court helped to slow the model down in their ruling of [Fourth Estate Public Benefit Corp. vs. Wall Street dot.com LLC](#) because in short, they said that a copyright is registered when the copyright office issues a registration number. Merely filing for registration is not a registration.

“ Merely filing for a copyright registration is not an actual registration.

Jason Tucker

Yes, the official date of registration will be the day that you filed it but until you get a number it's not registered.

People can't just register content on Tuesday and run to the courthouse on

Wednesday now.

That kind of takes us into “part two” of Prenda because they tried to hatch this business model and as a result of it a buddy of mine who owns a content company, he got hurt because he anchored himself to this sinking ship of Prenda.

My friend, which we will call **Stefon*, is a smart programmer and he’s always had an uncharacteristic altruistic view of how online business should work. He believes that people should be honest and not steal from each other. We share that belief that people shouldn’t steal.

**Stefon* made millions. He also spent millions on building his business. He hosted some of the most adventurous weekends and parties.

Even though I tried to beat it into him every chance I got, I could never understand why he wouldn’t properly register his library. By the time he actually wanted to enforce it, he had lost a lot of the benefits...like the option of attorney’s fees after winning a case.

I’m betting, that as a result of not being able to fully leverage that angle and out of a desire to put a dent in piracy, he came up with this way to track and see what users were doing. If they were sharing and selling passwords to his web site and then who was logging in and stealing and sharing his library.

I think he thought he found a way to thwart some of these password traders. At least with his content. Past that, he just ended up with IP addresses. And so he needed to get more information. So how do we do that? Well, he got in touch with John Steele and shared everything he had going on. Steele saw this as an opportunity.

The business model again, on its face, can use the same elements they were

using before to garner the same results. So off they went.

The problem was that the House of Cards was already starting to unravel.

Service providers weren't going to be so quick to give information to Penda Law Group, John Steele, Paul Hansmeier, or Paul Duffy. They were all too familiar with them and now the courts weren't gonna be so quick either.

Service providers decided to take Steele and company to court by taking **Stefon* out for a walk. In the end, **Stefon* had to pay a lot of money for their time and Steele, Hansmeier, and Duffy never fully actualize that model.

Again, it's a viable one. But this is what happens when a legitimate content producer hooks into somebody who is not exactly...honest.

Paul Hansmeier

Paul Hansmeier was sentenced to 14 years in prison. He was staring down the barrel of a lot more. He has to pay \$1,541,527.37 in restitution. This amount is separate from what he already got in fines and sanctions that have been accruing over the years.

John Steele's Sentence

John Steele was sentenced to 60 months in jail and he has to pay \$1,541,527.37 in restitution. This amount is separate from what he already got in fines and sanctions that have been accruing over the years.

Paul Duffy

Paul Duffy killed himself with booze.

The story of Prenda Law and the lessons we can learn from it

Jason's story here.

1. IF YOU WERE A VICTIM OF PRENDA LAW GO [HERE](#) AND FILE A CLAIM.
-

Strike 3 Holdings

Strike 3 Holdings has filed about 3000 lawsuits (in the last couple of years) typically against John Doe's.

At the time of this post & recording in July & August 2019, there is a Strike 3 Holdings LLC vs. John Doe case out of New York, as an example.

A judge in New York said and I'm quoting "allowing expedited discovery in these circumstances creates a risk that strike three will be in a position to effectively coerce the identified subscribers into paying thousands of dollars to settle claims that may or may not have merit so as to avoid either cost of litigation or the embarrassment of being sued for using unlawful means to view adult material."

The judges understand what's really going on here.

What to do and how to fight copyright trolls:

Over the years I've quite purposefully worked to help those I believe that have been falsely accused of copyright infringement by real trolls and I've assisted attorneys and mounting defenses against troll companies. I fucking despise it.

To me, it's carpet-bombing for profit.

Real people who really didn't do much of anything get swept up and since they don't know what they don't know they get taken advantage of and feel forced to pay for silence.

I'm not saying there aren't legitimate copyright claims in that pile but more often than not the evidence they use is thin at best, questionable, and suspect. They bank on a mark just paying to make them go away. They're not looking to have a case and go the distance. They bank on you agreeing to settle.

“ Over the years I've quite purposefully worked to help those I believe that have been falsely accused of copyright infringement by real trolls and I've assisted attorneys and mounting defenses against troll companies. I fucking despise it.

Jason Tucker

First, if you did it, you can mount somewhat of a defense. See if you can negotiate a lower amount just be done with it

If you think you can prove you didn't or you think this ask is nuts or they're just not being reasonable in your eyes and you want to try and fight him off then listen up.

You're going to want an attorney preferably someone who has IP experience or someone who has experience dealing with trolls.

You're going to need to be prepared to say and honor these words. “Sue me!”

You need to be prepared to back it up by defending yourself. If they do sue you, whatever money you spend, assume you're not going to see it again.

Find out if the contents registered.

Now here's the thing, if it's not registered, they really don't have much of a case because of actual versus statutory damages without attorney's fees.

You're going to want whoever is gunning for you to show you whatever evidence they have. You want to see the evidence. You want them to prove that you downloaded the full version and had the ability to use what they said you downloaded. Chances are they won't be able to do it.

When you asked to see the evidence, they'll probably tell you that the only way you're going to see it is if they sue you. That should be your first red flag.

You might be wondering why.

Because it's bullshit to play hide the ball. If their evidence is that good they shouldn't have a problem showing it to you.

“ If their evidence is that good they shouldn't have a problem showing it to you.

Jason Tucker

Their evidence is usually nothing more than an IP address that crossed the digital path associated with some title of some work.

If judges have learned from these schemes, again remember that they're less inclined to grant that early discovery, so really that works to your benefit because it stops being cost-effective for them. And since they're not really fully documenting the infringements they can't really properly plead a strong case.

You could probably get that knocked out if they actually do file.

To put that in perspective here's a real example of how I helped a studio owner's accountant get his son out of the sights of a troll this past year.

The new troll game that's getting looked at more doesn't really need the courts. That's what I call the ***password trader shakedown***.

Now are there legitimate uses of this and can you use it for good? And can you be absolutely right? Yes! That doesn't mean that that's how it's going to be used all the time.

Password Trader Scam

So here's one of the ways that the Password Trader Scam works.

You become a paid member of the 'Leave Britney Alone Fan Club' and somehow your username and password are used to download the Leave Britney Alone theme song, and that song ends up on a shared file site like the land of torrents.

The site owner sees the Britney theme song is available on that site and because of the technology they can trace it back to your username and password as the original person who downloaded the song from the website.

Not going to go into specifics (because I like the technology itself and I see some long term uses) since he's paid for the membership the Leave Britney Alone fan club likely has your name address and email. They send you a letter that says if you don't do this by X then we will do Y.

Malibu Media

Here's how it played out for this kid in real life. (I say kid because it's the son of the accountant, but this kid was in his early twenties.) He gets an email and the email basically says, "Pay us \$10,000 by Friday or we won't settle for less than \$30,000 after that, we'll file a lawsuit, and everyone will find out that you downloaded gay big black booty sex part 28."

Sound familiar? Yeah! These guys were trying to operate like Prenda.

I spoke with the dad and he was prepared to pay something if he had to. Not the \$30,000 or even the \$10,000 but he had spoken to an attorney friend of his he was really weighing his options.

I spoke with the son and I said Just tell me the truth. I can't help you if you're lying to me. That's just reality.

The email had a PBF letter attached to it. And what was interesting what stood out to me is in the PDA F A represented that it was CCD to an IP attorney will call **Allen*. Now I know **Allen*. I've worked with **Allen*. Nothing about this letter and **Allen* fit.

On its face, it's not uncommon for people to include an attorney in a demand for spice but what I smelled is that. **Allen* was openly CC'D on the PDF but not on the email.

So I was doubtful if **Allen* even knew about the letter and it was totally uncharacteristic because **Allen* does his own work. He's working in a completely separate industry right now. He's not even dealing with this type of IP law.

So I look to see if the content was registered.

I looked at the track record of the studio litigating the claims and some other

items and when all the pieces of the puzzle were put together I believed I was staring at a shakedown.

So I told the dad and his son what I would like to do I told him to run my suggestions across an attorney before I do anything.

Now I'm not an attorney and it's important to me for people to hear all of the options and our tactics can be a little unconventional but they work.

So I called **Allen* the attorney who was CCD on the letter right off the bat past hellos. I immediately jumped into it very quickly and I went into the subject matter of the letter told him that the person that they sent the letter to was willing to accept service to the lawsuit and that I was just placing him with one of our litigators and I needed a little bit more time if I could ask as a favor.

I did that very purposefully.

**Allen* says, "Let me stop you right there. What are you talking about? I don't represent them anymore."

So, of course, very telling.

So I shared what was going on. Of course, I would happily honor **Allen's* request to send him a copy of the letter that was flashing his name. So what do I do? I wrote back to the sender of the original e-mail included the original letter attachment is a studio executive albeit not well but enough that I could share the reasons why he should just move on and I cc'd **Allen* and thanked him for his time on our call.

I absolutely poked the bear with a stick.

What did I do in that e-mail?

I had separated what was once two parties now into three parties two of whom now have a larger issue than our guy has.

I'm guessing *Allen's questions are; How many of these letters have gone out? How many times is this guy collected money in my name or using my name? What are the unknowns that I do not know about? Am I exposed to any liability? *Allen doesn't know, but *Allen wants to know.

That has nothing to do with our guy.

So, of course, the studio executive, after whatever dust settled for him, tried to push back on me.

Even though I asked him to sue me in every email response, he wouldn't file a lawsuit.

Why?

Because he never had any intention of filing a lawsuit.

So over the course of two weeks, he kept writing and wanting to tell me. And he just kept telling me what he's gonna do I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna do that and I was like do it. I finally sent him a link to a chart that showed how to take action steps.

Yes, I continued poking the bear.

I did this is because the likelihood that the company was gonna do anything was about zero.

So I absofuckinglutely played him for a bit.

He wouldn't share any evidence. *Allen had made it clear that he was absolutely not involved. So I just kept calling this guy's bullshit and I kept him talking. And so as a result of that his own emails gave me enough ammo that if need be any actually filed we'd throttle him. So end of the story. He moved on and of course not without telling me. He may rethink this decision and change his mind later. Fuck him.

So I don't recommend you be as brazen as that but feel free to use elements to help your situation or someone you know who may find themselves in this situation.

Trolling is not limited to copyright situations. Collection agencies. Predatory lenders, pump and dump schemes, they all use the same playbook.

They capitalize by using fear tactics. fear of being found out. Fear Of Missing Out. Fear of a huge fine fear of being reported to a credit bureau. And the way that they deal with it is the same and the way that I suggest you deal with it is the same which is. Show me what you have. I'll figure out what I'm willing to spend and if I'm willing to spend and then we can talk because to me end-user litigation is bullshit.

1. Here is one method to [slay a copyright troll](#) from Attorney Morgan Pietz
2. [Here](#) is a link to a good paper that explains how to mount a "do it yourself" defense against copyright trolls. If nothing else a [paper that provides](#) a clearer understanding of what can happen and what you can do.
3. Don't steal content, pay for it. Avoid a potential legal nightmare and support content creators. [What should you do if you get a cease & desist letter.](#)

In Conclusion

Prenda Law Conclusion

Prenda Law; John Steele, Paul Hansmeier, (& Paul Duffy) were finally stopped by the Federal Government. All three were disbarred. John Steele and Paul Hansmeier were fined and sentenced to serve jail time.

How to deal with copyright trolls

If you should get a letter, get it as much information about the accusation as you can. Find out if the content is or is not registered with the [U.S. Copyright Office](#).

Realize that you're in the driver's seat if the infringed content is not registered with the US Copyright Office because the lawsuit will probably be too expensive for the other side.

The only time I believe they would file is if they needed to make an example out of someone because their ability to collect on a judgment or even get a good number against what it would cost is pretty small.

If you're a content producer don't buy into these end-user scams.

Register your work and if you want to enter into end-user litigation know that Prenda Law fucked up your ability to do it in a cost-effective structure and the smoke hasn't cleared.

If end users are a problem. Know that there are other ways of solving it.

You can still make money by working to shift a problem without terrorizing massive amounts of people, pulling virtual guns on users, and especially tech-savvy torrent users are not going to end in a real win for you. They will come back and fuck with you in areas you haven't even thought of. You're better off working out a deal get a little money and an agreement that they won't do it again or else.

If you're using torrents or other peer-to-peer software to get content for free. Understand that you're stealing a copy of something you could pay a small fee for and do the right thing and let the content owner make something from their efforts.

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Join us for free on the [Facebook Group](#) to contact Jason and let us know how we can help you.

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